

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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FM AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5503

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 SANTO DOMINGO 4157

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, DR

SUBJECT: FACTIONALISM IN THE PRD

REF: STATE 183358

1. SUMMARY: FOR THE PAST 2-1/2 MONTHS, THE PRD HAS CONCENTRATED ON THE STRUGGLE TO RETAIN CONTROL OF EXECUTIVE POWER IT WON MAY 16. BEGINNING AUGUST 16, THE PRD PRESIDENT WILL HAVE TO BATTLE ON SEVERAL FRONTS: TRYING TO MAKE AN INEXPERIENCED TEAM FROM DIFFERENT BACKGROUNDS FUNCTION AS AN EFFECTIVE GOVERNMENT; DEALING WITH SERIOUS ECONOMIC PROBLEMS; BREAKING OUT OF LEGISLATIVE RESTRAINTS IMPOSED BY THE PREVIOUS GOVERNMENT; AND PERHAPS CONFRONTING THE DOMINICAN MILITARY AND OTHER VESTED INTERESTS IN SEEKING TO EFFECT POLICY CHANGES. WHETHER OR NOT THE MULTI-CLASS STRUCTURE OF THE PARTY WILL BE ABLE TO MAINTAIN THE NATIONAL CONSENSUS NOW UNITED BEHIND ANTONIO GUZMAN REMAINS TO BE SEEN. HOWEVER, THERE IS REASON TO HOPE FOR FAIRLY MODERATE POLICIES FROM GUZMAN'S GOVERNMENT, THOUGH THE PARTY ITSELF MAY MANIFEST CONTRADICTIONARY VIEWS ON SOME ISSUES. END SUMMARY.

2. CURRENT RELATIONSHIPS AMONG POWER CENTERS IN THE PRD CANNOT APTLY BE DESCRIBED AS FACTIONALISM INASMUCH
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AS COMPETITION FOR LEADERSHIP, OR EVEN CONTROL OF THE PARTY, HAS BEEN SUBORDINATED WHILE THE PARTY'S ATTENTION HAS BEEN FOCUSED ON SECURING ITS ELECTORAL VICTORY. HOWEVER, THE GENERAL OUTLINES OF THE MAIN CURRENTS IN THE PRD ARE APPARENT, HAVING EMERGED FROM THE FREE COMPETITION FOR THE PARTY'S PRESIDENTIAL AND VICE-PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATIONS IN LAST YEAR'S "PRIMARY" CAMPAIGN.

3. THE COALITION OF FORCES WHICH BROUGHT ABOUT ANTONIO GUZMAN'S NOMINATION IS USUALLY THOUGHT TO HAVE BEEN LED BY OLD-GUARD PRD LOYALISTS; A FEW OF WHOM EVEN GO BACK TO THE FOUNDING OF THE PARTY IN EXILE IN 1939. (THE "ANTI-REELECTION" PLATFORM OF THE PRD, WHICH GUZMAN SUPPORTS, MEANS HE CANNOT BE A CANDIDATE IN 1982.)

4. ANOTHER CURRENT THAT EMERGED IN THE PRIMARY FIGHT IS IDENTIFIED WITH THE "PHENOMENON" OF SALVADOR JORGE BLANCO, NOW SENATOR-ELECT AND INTERIM PRESIDENT OF THE PARTY. JORGE'S APPEAL EXTENDS OUTSIDE THE PARTY TO THE INDUSTRIAL/COMMERCIAL ELITE AND MIDDLE CLASS PROFESSIONALS, BUT IT ATTRACTED LITTLE SUPPORT FROM THE CADRES AND THE RANK AND FILE OF THE PRD, WHO WERE MOTIVATED MAINLY BY THE SENTIMENTAL PRINCIPLE OF REWARDING PARTY LOYALTY. GUZMAN HAD WORKED FOR THE PARTY ALL THROUGH THE LEAN YEARS, WHILE JORGE, PROMINENT IN 1965, HAD KEPT ALOOF FROM PARTY POLITICS OVER THE NEXT DOZEN YEARS TO SERVE AS A LAWYER FOR POWERFUL ECONOMIC SECTORS, WHICH BY AND LARGE WERE NOT AMONG THE PRD'S SUPPORTERS. JORGE UNDOUBTEDLY IS PRESIDENTIAL TIMBER AND HIS LEADERSHIP OF THE PRD MINORITY IN THE NEXT SENATE WILL GIVE HIM A PLATFORM FOR POSSIBLE NOMINATION AND ELECTION IN 1982.

5. VICE-PRESIDENT-ELECT JACOBO MAJLUTA, WHO ALSO HAS PRESIDENTIAL ASPIRATIONS, REPRESENTS A THIRD MAIN CURRENT.
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MORE ACTION-ORIENTED AND HARD-DRIVING THAN THE TACITURN, ALOOF JORGE, MAJLUTA HAS CONSIDERABLE APPEAL IN THE PARTY ORGANIZATION, PARTICULARLY THE YOUTH SECTOR. HOW HE PERFORMS AS VICE-PRESIDENT--IN WHICH OFFICE HE CLEARLY INTENDS TO PLAY AN ACTIVE ROLE--OBVIOUSLY WILL AFFECT HIS 1982 CHANCES.

6. ASTRIDE THESE POWER CENTERS IS SECGEN JOSE FRANCISCO PENA GOMEZ, THE INTELLECTUALLY GIFTED, CHARISMATIC, SOMETIMES ERRATIC AND ALWAYS CONTROVERSIAL LEADER WHO IS MAINLY RESPONSIBLE FOR REPAIRING THE PARTY WRECKAGE LEFT BY JUAN BOSCH IN 193. PENA BUILT IT INTO A MACHINE THAT ATTRACTED ENOUGH INDEPENDENT SUPPORT TO UPSET A STRONG INCUMBENT PRESIDENT. PENA HAS WORKED TO MAKE THE PRD A BROAD-BASED, REPRESENTATIVE AND POPULAR POLITICAL MOVEMENT. TO PENA THE PARTY OFFERS THE COUNTRY THE MEANS OF BRINGING MODERN AND RESPONSIVE GOVERNMENT TO THE DOMINICAN PEOPLE IN PLACE OF CAUDILLOISM. HIS LEADERSHIP EXTENDS FROM ATTRACTING THE POPULAR, DARK-SKINNED MASSES TO SERVING AS THE KEY PARTY CONTACT WITH THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL DEMOCRATS AND THE "WASHINGTON LIBERALS." HE HAS LITTLE APPEAL, HOWEVER, TO GROUPS OUTSIDE THE PARTY IN THE "MIDDLE SECTORS," WHOSE SUPPORT THE PARTY

NEEDS TO GOVERN EFFECTIVELY, AND HE IS ANATHEMA TO THE MILITARY.

7. DIFFERENCES WITHIN THE LEADERSHIP ARE EVIDENT BUT ARE NOT DEEPLY IDEOLOGICAL. GUZMAN IS A CONSERVATIVE, WEALTHY LANDOWNER. JORGE BLANCO IS A LAWYER FOR BLUE-CHIP BUSINESS INTERESTS BUT PRIVATELY IS STRONGLY CRITICAL OF THE LANDED OLIGARCHY, I.E., GUZMAN'S PEOPLE. MAJLUTA, A SOMETIME CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANT WHO MARRIED INTO A WEALTHY FAMILY, IS AT THE SAME TIME A POPULIST POLITICIAN AND A FERVENT ANTI-COMMUNIST. PENA, A FULL-TIME PROFESSIONAL POLITICIAN WITH NO PERSONAL FORTUNE, HAS A POPULIST STYLE WHICH GIVES THE IMPRESSION HE IS A RADICAL; BUT HE IS ESSENTIALLY A DEMOCRAT WITH AN OVERBLOWN FEAR OF BEING CONFIDENTIAL

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OUTFLANKED ON ISSUES BY THE RADICAL LEFT, A LEGACY FROM HIS BLOOD FEUD WITH JUAN BOSCH. BOSCH'S 1973 DEPARTURE FROM THE PRD TO FORM HIS OWN DOMINICAN LIBERATION PARTY TOOK MOST OF THE MARXISTS OUT OF THE PARTY, LEAVING IT BASICALLY A PRAGMATIC, DEMOCRATICALLY-ORIENTED ORGANIZATION WITHOUT DEEP-SEATED RIFTS.

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FM AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5504

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 SANTO DOMINGO 4157

8. UNDER THE UNIFYING PARTY "MYSTIQUE," EACH OF THESE FIGURES IS A CLAN LEADER WITH A PERSONALISTIC CLIENTELE WITHIN THE PARTY (JORGE LESS THAN THE OTHERS); PARTY

MEMBERS WHO LINE UP OUTSIDE THEIR OFFICES TO ASK FOR HELP AND FAVORS.

9. THE INCOMING PRESIDENT HAS PLEDGED A GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL UNITY THAT WILL REACH OUT FOR THE BEST AVAILABLE TALENT, REGARDLESS OF POLITICS. MAJLUTA, AN EARLY HOUDOUT AGAINST THIS APPROACH, NOW SAYS HE ACCEPTS GUZMAN'S WORD ON ALL APPOINTMENTS AS FINAL; OTHER MAJOR PARTY LEADERS ACCEPTED GUZMAN'S DECISION FROM THE OUTSET NOT TO HAVE A STRICTLY PRD GOVERNMENT. TOGETHER, THEY INTEND, TO THE EXTENT POSSIBLE, TO KEEP THE PARTY OUT OF GOVERNMENT POLICY-MAKING.

10. RECOGNIZING THAT GUZMAN WILL OPERATE UNDER GREAT PRESSURE--TRYING TO SOLVE THE SERIOUS PROBLEMS HE INHERITS WHILE SUBJECT TO POLITICAL HARASSMENT FROM HIS POLITICAL OPPOSITION AND CLOSE SCRUTINY FROM A SUSPICIOUS MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT AND FROM APPREHENSIVE BUSINESS SECTORS--THE PARTY WILL TEND TO ACCEPT THE DECISIONS OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT IN THE INITIAL PERIOD FOLLOWING ITS INSTALLATION. INDEPENDENT WELL-WISHERS ALSO SEEM INCLINED TO GIVE THE CONFIDENTIAL

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NEW GOVERNMENT THE BENEFIT OF A DOUBT, FOR A TIME AT LEAST. THUS, FOR THE SHORT AND MID-TERM FUTURE, WE WOULD EXPECT THIS CONSENSUS TO HOLD, OTHER THINGS REMAINING ROUGHLY EQUAL (E.G. NO NONSTITUTIONAL CRISES).

11. OVER TIME, HOWEVER, THE RIVAL AMBITIONS OF PRINCIPAL CONTENDERS FOR THE PARTY'S 1982 NOMINATION AND DIVERGENT POSITIONS ON ISSUES WITHIN THE PARTY, AND BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE PARTY, COULD BUILD UP FRICTION. AGRARIAN REFORM IS AN EXAMPLE: THE RANGE OF IDEAS ON HOW THIS SHOULD PROCEED SPAN THE IDEOLOGICAL SPECTRUM AMONG THE FORCES NOW BACKING GUZMAN; HE HIMSELF, OF COURSE, HAS ALWAYS BEEN RATED A CONSERVATIVE ON THE ISSUE. "SOCIAL" LEGISLATION DRAWN FROM THE EXPERIENCE OF MEMBERS OF THE SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL, TO WHICH THE PRD IS AFFILIATED, COULD BE ANOTHER SOURCE OF CONTENTION. HUMANITARIAN QUESTIONS SUCH AS THE TREATMENT OF SO-CALLED "POLITICAL PRISONERS" WILL PRODUCE YET FURTHER STRAINS. AND THE PRD HAS YET TO DEFINE ITS POSITIONS ON INTERNATIONAL ISSUES, INCLUDING ITS IDENTIFICATION WITH THIRD-WORLD CAUSES.

12. WHILE THESE ISSUES WILL EVENTUALLY BECOME MORE CLEARLY DEFINED, THE NEW GOVERNMENT'S FIRST IMPORTANT CHALLENGE WILL BE THE NEED TO REINVIGORATE THE ECONOMY, WHICH HAS BEEN BATTERED BY THE DECLINE IN SUGAR PRICES AND HAS STAGNATED DURING THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN AND THE UNCERTAINTIES OF THE PERIOD SINCE. RESTORATION OF THE ECONOMY WOULD CONTRIBUTE

IMPORTANTLY TO GENERAL CONFIDENCE IN THE NEW GOVERNMENT.

13. IT WILL BE DIFFICULT TO ASCERTAIN WHICH CURRENT MIGHT GAIN THE UPPER HAND IN THE PARTY, UNTIL THE NEW GOVERNMENT HAS GAINED SOME EXPERIENCE. THE PROSPECTS WILL BECOME CLEARER AFTER THE NEXT NATIONAL CONVENTION OF THE PRD,
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EXPECTED SOMETIME IN NOVEMBER, WHEN THE PARTY LEADERSHIP IS CHOSEN FOR THE NEXT YEAR OR TWO. AT THIS JUNCTURE, HOWEVER, ANTONIO GUZMAN IS CLEARLY EMERGING AS THE PREDOMINANT LEADER OF THE PRD GOVERNMENT. HIS STRENGTH AND JUDGMENT HAVE SURPRISED THOSE WHO PORTRAYED HIM BEFORE MAY 16 AS A MAN WHO WOULD BE DOMINATED BY SUCH PARTY FIGURES AS PENA OR MAJLUTA. WE EXPECT THAT A MEASURE OF BALANCE WILL BE MAINTAINED IN THE PARTY ORGANIZATION ITSELF FOR SOME TIME UNDER PENA'S STEADYING HAND, ALTHOUGH WITH OBVIOUS PULLING AND HAULING BY THOSE LOYAL TO MAJLUTA ON THE ONE HAND AND JORGE ON THE OTHER.

14. IMPLICATIONS FOR US POLICY: THE PRD IS BETTER CHARACTERIZED AS A PARTY WITH A PLURALITY OF LEADERSHIP AND A DOMOCRATIC COLLEGIAL DECISIION-MAKING PROCESS THATN A PARTY OF FACTIONALISM. THIS HAS BEEN THE SOURCE OF SOME FRUSTRATION FOR THOSE ATTEMPTING TO GET FROM ITS LEADERSHIP QUICAND UNAMBIGUOUS POSITIONS. (DESIGNATION OF RESPONSIBILITY IN THE PARTY FOR A GIVEN MATTER IS SOMETIMES VAGUE AND ONE PARTY LEADER MAY NOT KNOW THAT THE OTHER IS DOING.) WE WOULD ASSUME THAT GUZMAN AS HEAD OF A PRD GOVERNMENT WILL MAKE DECISIONS IN A SOMEWHAT MORE STRUCTURED AND AUTHORITATIVE MANNER. FROM THE VIEWPOINT OF U.S. POLICY, PLURALISM IN THE PRD MAY AT TIMES CAUSE CONFUSION AS TO GOVERNMENT ATTITUDES BUT SHOULD NOT CAUSE GRAVE PROBLEMS. WE HAVE REASON TO HOPE FOR FAIRLY RESPONSIVE AND MODERATE POLICIES FROM GUZMAN'S GOVERNMENT, THOUGH ON SOME ISSUES CONTRADICTORY STATEMENTS MAY COME OUT OF THE PARTY ITSELF. EMBASSY WILL PROVIDE FURTHER ANALYSIS AFTER PARTY CONVENTION NEXT NOVEMBER.
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